(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) No such statement has been made by the British Labour Party.

Pakistan Premier's offer to hold Talks with India

483. SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister of India responded positively to Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif's offer to hold talks between the two governments and suggested meeting first at the Foreign Ministers' level for normalising relations and to sort out outstanding issues; and

(b) if so, the progress in this regard made so far indicating at which level and when the talks are likely to be held?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Prime Minister has, in this letter of felicitations to the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, proposed an early resumption of a wide ranging comprehensive bilateral dialogue at an appropriate level on all issues of mutual concern. Prime Minister has conveyed that there are a number of opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and that we approach these in a positive and constructive spirit.

Indo-British Joint Collaboration

484. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken steps to establish joint collaboration between India and United Kingdom;

(b) whether some pacts haved been recently signed between the two countries;

(c) if so, the areas in which the collaborations been made; and

(d) the details of the pacts made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) An Indo-British Partnership, earlier known as the Indo-British Partnership Initiative, has been in existence from 1993 to promote closer economic cooperation, particularly between the private sectors.

(b) During the partnership Summit organised in January in Calcutta by the confederation of Indian Industries, several agreements were signed between Indian companies and their British counterparts; these were not agreements between the countries or Governments.

(c) An inter-Governmental MOU has been signed with the UK in January on "Cooperation in coal-related industries".

(d) The MOU establishes an Indo-British Coal Forum, which would be a partnership between the coal related industries of the United Kingdom and India; it wouldd be supported by the Governments and provide a link between them and industry. Several cooperative activities have been identified under the MOU.

America's Kashmir Policy

485. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent statement of the U.S. Asstt. Secretary of State Ms. Robin Raphel that the elections in Jammu & Kashmir have not resolved the issue and that Kashmir remains a disputed territory for the US policy on Kashmir; and

(b) if so, whether the statement reflects US policy on Kashmir; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Government has been press items